

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
BEAUMONT DIVISION

JASON CHRISTIAN VARNER	§	
VS.	§	CIVIL ACTION NO. 1:18cv294
DIRECTOR, TDCJ-CID	§	

MEMORANDUM ORDER OVERRULING PETITIONER’S OBJECTIONS AND  
ADOPTING THE MAGISTRATE JUDGE’S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Petitioner Jason Christian Varner, an inmate confined at the Stiles Unit of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Correctional Institutions Division, proceeding *pro se*, brought this petition for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254.

The court referred this matter to the Honorable Zack Hawthorn, United States Magistrate Judge, at Beaumont, Texas, for consideration pursuant to applicable laws and orders of this court. The Magistrate Judge recommends the petition be dismissed.

The court has received and considered the Report and Recommendation of United States Magistrate Judge filed pursuant to such order, along with the record, pleadings and all available evidence. Petitioner filed objections to the magistrate judge’s Report and Recommendation. Accordingly, the court conducted a *de novo* review of the objections in relation to the pleadings and the applicable law. *See* FED. R. CIV. P. 72(b).

After careful consideration, the court concludes petitioner’s objections should be overruled. As set forth in the Report and Recommendation, petitioner’s claims concerning disciplinary report #20170369616 do not affect the fact or duration of his confinement and do not present grounds warranting relief pursuant to federal habeas corpus review.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, because there is no right to counsel in prison disciplinary hearings, petitioner’s claims that counsel was ineffective are without merit. *See Wainwright v. Torna*, 455 U.S. 586, 587-88 (1982) (when no right to counsel exists, one

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<sup>1</sup> Petitioner’s remaining claims have been severed from this action to proceed as a separate civil rights action.

cannot be deprived of the effective assistance of counsel); *Enriquez v. Mitchell*, 533 F.2d 275, 276 (5th Cir. 1976). Accordingly, the petition should be dismissed.

Furthermore, petitioner is not entitled to the issuance of a certificate of appealability. An appeal from a judgment denying federal habeas corpus relief may not proceed unless a judge issues a certificate of appealability. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 2253; FED. R. APP. P. 22(b). The standard for granting a certificate of appealability, like that for granting a certificate of probable cause to appeal under prior law, requires the movant to make a substantial showing of the denial of a federal constitutional right. *See Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 483-84 (2000); *Elizalde v. Dretke*, 362 F.3d 323, 328 (5th Cir. 2004); *see also Barefoot v. Estelle*, 463 U.S. 880, 893 (1982). In making that substantial showing, the movant need not establish that he should prevail on the merits. Rather, he must demonstrate that the issues are subject to debate among jurists of reason, that a court could resolve the issues in a different manner, or that the questions presented are worthy of encouragement to proceed further. *See Slack*, 529 U.S. at 483-84. Any doubt regarding whether to grant a certificate of appealability is resolved in favor of the movant, and the severity of the penalty may be considered in making this determination. *See Miller v. Johnson*, 200 F.3d 274, 280-81 (5th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 531 U.S. 849 (2000).

Here, petitioner has not shown that any of the issues raised by his claims are subject to debate among jurists of reason. The factual and legal questions advanced by petitioner are not novel and have been consistently resolved adversely to his position. In addition, the questions presented are not worthy of encouragement to proceed further. Therefore, petitioner has failed to make a sufficient showing to merit the issuance of a certificate of appealability. Accordingly, a certificate of appealability shall not be issued.

#### ORDER

Accordingly, petitioner's objections are **OVERRULED**. The findings of fact and conclusions of law of the magistrate judge are correct and the report of the magistrate judge is

**ADOPTED.** A final judgment will be entered in this case in accordance with the magistrate judge's recommendations.

**SIGNED** this the **21** day of **February, 2019**.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thad Heartfield", written over a horizontal line.

Thad Heartfield  
United States District Judge